REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 22, 2003. Claims 1-34 are presented for examination and have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regard as his invention. Claims 1, 7, 13, 19, 25-29, 31, and 33 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,166,826 (*Yokoyama*).

As shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 7, 13, 19, 25-29, 31, and 33 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is a print attribute management server for receiving print information and an instruction specifying print attribute information from a plurality of clients and executing print processing of the received print information at a printer designated from a plurality of printers. The server includes managing means, communicating means, specifying means and controlling means. The managing means manages a plurality of units of print attribute information used in executing the print processing by the designated printer, the plurality of units of print attribute information being input independent of the print information. The communicating means receives the print information and the instruction specifying print attribute information from the plurality of units of print attribute information managed by the managing means from one of the plurality of clients. The specifying means specifies

the print attribute information from among the plurality of units of print attribute information on the basis of the instruction received by the communication means. The controlling means converts the print information received by the communicating means into print data which can be printed by the designated printer, using the print attribute information specified by the specifying means.

Among other important features of Claim 1 are managing a plurality of units of print attribute information used in executing the print processing by the designated printer, the plurality of print attribute information being input independent of the print information, and converting the print information received by the communicating means into print data which can be printed by the designated printer, using the print attribute information specified by the specifying means. That is, a client is only required to send print information (without print attribute information) and an instruction specifying print attribute information to the server. In the server, the print attribute information is specified in response to the received instruction, and the received print information can be converted into appropriate print data using the specified print attribute information. Thus, even if the client computer does not contain any printer drivers for the print information, desired print results can be achieved.

Yokoyama relates to printing a file stored in a storage unit to be read, specified, and reprinted. In the *Yokoyama* system, a printing apparatus determines whether a storage specification is set in the received print data, and if the storage specification is set, stores the attribute information of the print data and generates from the print data a print image for display as well as stores the print image. In response to a request from a client, the printing apparatus in the *Yokoyama* system returns a list of attribute information

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to the client. Also, in response to a request from the client, the printing apparatus returns the print image to the client.

The Office Action cites *Yokoyama* as disclosing the managing means of Claim 1, at column 9, lines 28-36. In the *Yokoyama* system, attribute information is set in the print information in advance; in the server of Claim 1, the print attribute information is input independent of the print information. Nothing has been found in *Yokoyama* that would teach or suggest managing a plurality of units of print attribute information used in executing the print processing by the designated printer, the plurality of units of print attribute information being input independent of the print information, as recited in Claim 1.

Further, nothing has been found in *Yokoyama* that would teach or suggest converting print information received by the communicating means into print data which can be printed by the designated printer, using print attribute information specified by specifying means, as further recited in Claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Applicant believes Claim 1 to be clearly patentable over *Yokoyama*.

Independent Claims 7, 13, and 19 are method, computer-readable storage medium, and program claims, respectively, corresponding to server Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 25 is a print server for receiving print information from a plurality of clients and enabling a designated printer to execute print processing of the received print information. The server includes managing

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means, distributing means, and outputting means. The managing means manages print attribute information received from a first client and used for executing the print processing by the designated printer, where the print attribute information is provided independent of the received print information and can be set to a print setting of printer drivers of the plurality of clients. The distributing means distributes the print attribute information to a second client in response to a request for acquiring the print attribute information received from the second client, and the outputting means receives print information generated by a printer driver of the second client based on the distributed print attribute information and outputs the received print information to the designated printer. The print set of the printer driver of the second client is updated by the distributed print attribute information.

Among other important features of Claim 25 is managing print attribute information received from a first client and used for executing the print processing by the designated printer, where the print attribute information is provided independent of the print information and can be set to a print setting of printer drivers of the plurality of clients. That is, the print server manages the print attribute information that is provided independent of the received print information and which can be used by a plurality of clients. Thus, it is possible for a client to obtain print attribute information from the server and update the print setting of its printer driver based on the obtained print attribute information. By virtue of this feature, the troublesome operations by a user of a client computer to manually register the print attribute information in the printer driver will be eliminated.

As discussed previously in connection with Claim 1, nothing has been found in *Yokoyama* that would teach or suggest that the print attribute information is

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provided independent of the print information, as recite in Claim 25. Further, nothing has been found in *Yokoyama* that would teach or suggest that print attribute information should be set to a print setting of printer drivers of the plurality of clients, as further recited in Claim 25.

For at least the above reasons, Applicant believes Claim 25 to be clearly patentable over *Yokoyama*.

Independent Claims 26-28 are method, computer-readable storage medium, and program claims, respectively, corresponding to server Claim 25, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 25.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 29 is an information processing apparatus operating as a client for communicating with a server that manages print attribute information and for executing print processing by a printer. The apparatus includes issuing means, print attribute setting means, and print data converting means. The issuing means issues a request for acquiring print attribute information to the server, where the print attribute information is being managed independent of print information at the server. The print attribute setting means acquires the print attribute information in response to the issued acquisition request and performs print setting of a printer driver as a print attribute of print information on the basis of the acquired print attribute information. The print data converting means converts the print information into print data which can be printed by the printer based on the set print attribute by using the printer driver set by the print attribute setting means.

Among other important features of Claim 29 are that the print attribute information is being managed independent of print information at the server, and acquiring

the print attribute information in response to the issued acquisition request and performing print setting of a printer driver as a print attribute of print information on the basis of the acquired print attribute information. That is, the information processing apparatus (client) can perform print setting of its printer driver based on the acquired print attribute information. By virtue of this feature, the troublesome operations for the user of the client computer to register the print attribute information in the printer driver manually will be eliminated.

As discussed above in connection with Claim 1, nothing has been found in *Yokoyama* that would teach or suggest print attribute information being managed independent of print information at a server, as recited in Claim 29.

Furthermore, nothing has been found in *Yokoyama* that would teach or suggest acquiring print attribute information in response to an issued acquisition request and performing print setting of a printer driver as a print attribute of print information on the basis of the acquired print attribute information, as further recited in Claim 29.

For at least the above reasons, Applicant believes Claim 29 to be clearly patentable over *Yokoyama.*

Independent Claims 31 and 33 are method and computer-readable storage medium claims, respectively, corresponding to apparatus Claim 29, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 29.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of

the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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